

Our banner is redesigned this month to compliment this special edition on local papers

Depot Town Rag

Volume 17, Number 4 "All the news in one block in one month."

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

100% FREE
Rag Content
April 1994

- Market appointments
 - Outdoor stalls coming
 - Birthday sweets
 - **Crime column** 
 - Lost poets found 
- and other strictly local stuff. . .

WEMU proposes more Heritage events

WEMU station manager, Art Timko, has proposed additional events for this August's Heritage Fest to its co-chairs, Cris Vogelsberg and Dave Bogarin. The Heritage Jazz Competition, which draws thousands to three days of continuous free performances in Depot Town, will need a new kind of underwriting if it is to be continued, says Timko.

In addition, WEMU proposes a Tent Party: two evenings of live dance/party entertainment featuring music and talent similar to that of previous festivals that would be broadcast by the station.

For these events to take place, Timko says he counts on continued partnership with DTA, assistance in identifying and attracting prizes for winners, costs for production paid by the Festival Committee, and a guarantee to the radio station not to suffer a net financial loss.

Last year's event, he notes, enjoyed perfect weather, large crowds, and great performances with Festival-supplied furnishings and a \$2500 sponsor - with net proceeds of \$1300. In addition, Linda Yohn, last year's independent contractor who produced the event, will not be available for this year's Festival.

"WEMU is interested in changing the focus of the event to education," Timko points out. He also notes that a budget would need to be cooperatively established with funding guaranteed by Festival, including personnel, equipment rental, prizes/stipend and that Festival would be responsible for all expenses and receive all revenues with the exception of a \$500 net guarantee to the radio station.

'Guest editor' Clemens comments on the newspapering tradition in Our Town

Mark Twain never came to Ypsilanti, as far as any records show, but in his days as a local newspaper editor and writer he certainly must have known something about our reading style in this town. We weren't that different from most small towns he knew in the mid-west.

It was an editor of *The Ypsilanti Press* twenty years ago who said, "My number one job is to keep this newspaper in business." Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) never had such a head for business and his papers sometimes folded shortly after he was fired. Still, his observations of that exciting business seem to fit the world of publishing in Ypsilanti - past and present.

"To complain about your local newspaper," said Clemens, "is to argue with your visage in a glass." The 'glass' reference wasn't to a tumbler of whiskey, either, but referred to a reflection in a mirror. The only thing wrong with the local news, he proffered, was the locals. If we didn't like the way the stories read, we should start behaving better.

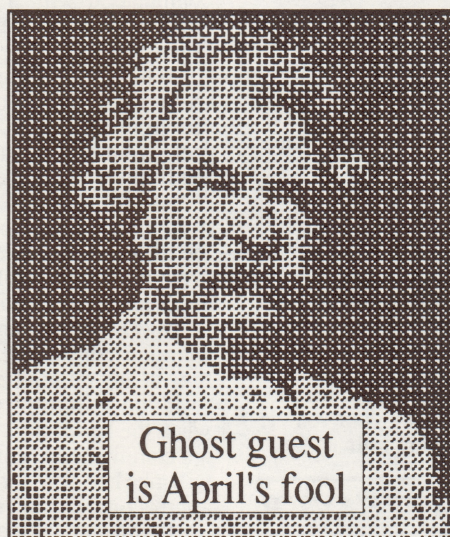
In another astute observation editor Clemens

noted, "The most common complaint about the local paper is when it is delivered late." That still seems the norm in this river town.

After the Mississippi River was closed down in the Civil War, Clemens went west with his brother Orion to spend a year "in fruitless

prospecting and speculation." He became a reporter for the *Territorial Enterprise* in August of 1862 at Virginia City, Nevada. In 1866 he was a correspondent for the *Sacramento Union*, then to New York where he became a travel writer for the *Alta California*, of San Francisco. Somewhere in his career he helped a Buffalo, NY paper go out of business, too.

Through all his fame as one of the favorite writers of America, Clemens stuck with his anti-intellectual point of view and never referred to himself as an author or writer. He always said he was "a



Ghost guest
is April's fool

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain), American newspaperman, river pilot, author, and lecturer is our 'guest editor' this month.

newspaperman."

The reviews of Ypsilanti's local newspapering efforts on page five are offered in the style *Rag* writers feel Clemens might have used had he passed through Washtenaw County at that time of his life - and today.

Campaign focuses on safety at the crossing

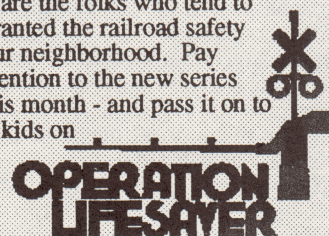
Potentially, the most dangerous place on any street or highway is a railroad highway grade crossing. Nationwide, the chance for death or serious injury in a train/motor-vehicle collision is forty times greater than for other types of highway accidents.

Public highway/railroad grade crossing accidents result in 600 fatalities and 2600 disabling injuries yearly. Over half of these occur at crossings with flashing lights and gates. Motorist and pedestrian disregard of these warning devices is the single most common factor in grade crossing accidents. These accidents occur at all hours of the day and night, at rural and urban locations, and at crossings with crossbuck signs, and those with automatic flashing lights and gates. The saddest part of this bad news is that these accidents could have been avoided.

The good news is that we are doing something about motor vehicle/train collisions at highway/railroad grade crossings. OPERATION LIFESAVER, [continued overleaf]

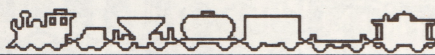
Regular readers warned

Those of us who come down here every day are the folks who tend to take for granted the railroad safety signs in our neighborhood. Pay special attention to the new series starting this month - and pass it on to the newer kids on the block.





Depot Town joins OPERATION LIFESAVER to stress railroad grade crossing safety



Important facts to know and remember

- Frequently, trains can take more than a mile to stop under emergency conditions.
- Practically speaking, a train cannot stop for you. You must act to insure your own safety.
- At highway/railroad grade crossings with flashing lights and/or crossing gates, the approaching train will arrive at the crossing in as few as 20 seconds after the lights start flashing.
- You are required to bring your vehicle to a stop not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail, nor more than 50 feet, when a train approaches, or the flashing lights are activated and gates come down.
- Trucks carrying hazardous materials are required to stop at all grade crossings. Drivers should make a safe, gradual stop to minimize the possibility of causing another driver to have an accident.
- Most grade crossing collisions involve motorists driving within 25 miles of their home.
- School buses are required to stop at all grade crossings. The driver must check both directions for approaching trains; proceed only when it is clearly safe to do so; and never shift gears on the crossing.
- State laws provide that it is unlawful for any person to drive a motor vehicle upon any railroad track at a public highway or municipal street crossing without taking proper precautions. This may require stopping your vehicle and looking for an approaching train.

OPERATION LIFESAVER

[continued from page one]

a cooperative effort of safety volunteers, Federal, state and local governmental agencies, the railroads, citizen groups throughout the nation, and the National Safety Council, has been successful in reducing this type of needless death and injury through public information and education. You can become a part of this vital effort - and possibly save your own life and the lives of others - by remembering some fundamental facts and using good judgment when you encounter highway/railroad grade crossings, either as a driver, as a passenger, or as a pedestrian.

Beginning this month is the first of a series of railroad crossing safety tips for Depot Towners to review. The biggest concern at our crossing is that we take it for granted - and may miss the very message these signs and signals attempt to give us. It is the intent of this series to make us all aware of the need for safety in our railroad district.

Study your *Rag* in April and May. There will be tests in June and July! The series begins on this page.

Important things to do

- When you see the round yellow railroad crossing warning sign when approaching railroad tracks, slow down sufficiently to stop if necessary. Lower your window to better hear a train horn. Turn down your stereo, CB radio, or car radio. Proceed only if you see that the tracks are clear in both directions.
- The principal cause of motor vehicle/train accidents is driver error, drivers who fail to obey warning signs and take dangerous risks when they approach a crossing. Many of these accidents occur at crossings equipped with train-activated warning devices.
- It is the motorist, not the motor vehicle, not the train, who creates the hazard and is primarily responsible.
- The black and white crossbuck sign marks the location of the crossing. Alone, or in combination with a bell, flashing light, or gates, it warns that you are at a crossing. Slow down, and look for trains.
- When the warning lights are flashing and the crossing gate is down, stop no less than 15 feet from the nearest track, nor more than 50 feet. Do not start until the gate has risen and the flashing lights are off.
- Wait for a passing train to clear a sufficient distance to insure good visibility, and check the tracks in both directions so that you don't drive into the path of a fast moving train on another track, hidden by the first train.
- Expect a train on any track at any time. You can not depend on the train being at the 'usual' time at any railroad crossing.
- If you are already driving across the tracks when the lights start to flash and/or the gates are coming down, continue driving across. It will take less time for you to cross than for the approaching train to reach the crossing.

• If you stall on the tracks when no train is approaching, you can take time to try to start the car or to get it pushed off the tracks, as long as you keep a sharp lookout for approaching trains.

• If you stall on the tracks when a train is approaching, get yourself and passengers out of the car and off of the tracks immediately and run alongside the tracks toward the approaching train to avoid flying debris.

• When driving, keep your attention on the road and the driving environment, so that you will be aware of warning signs and railroad crossings.

• When driving at night, keep your speed slow enough that you can safely stop in the distance that your headlights illuminate. You may have to stop for a train in a crossing.

• Adjust your speed for adverse weather or road conditions, so that you will be able to stop if it is necessary.

• Keep windows and your windshield clear of ice, snow, and fog, so that you can clearly see railroad crossing warning signs and approaching trains.

Important things not to do

Never try to beat an approaching train to a crossing.

Never drive past the lights when they are flashing, nor around a lowered crossing gates. *Never* drive onto a railroad track until you are certain you can drive all the way across. Don't get yourself boxed in on the tracks by cars stopped ahead of or behind you.

Never stay in your car if stalled on the tracks and a train is coming.

Never abandon a vehicle on the tracks at a crossing if NO train is approaching. If you cannot get it started, get it pushed off the tracks while keeping a lookout for approaching trains.

Never drive a car while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Never drive without all adults using safety belts and children in approved restraint seats.

Never drive a car with faulty brakes or other known mechanical defects.

By remembering the important railroad crossing facts and by putting the do's and don'ts explained in this series into everyday practice, you will be assuring safety for yourself and others at highway/railroad grade crossings. You will also be making a meaningful contribution to OPERATION LIFESAVER'S continuing program to make railroad grade crossings a safe place for everyone.

Deadline for ad copy and payment
for the June 23, 24, 25

Frog Island Festival

Program Book is May 1.
See Paul Feters, Judi Monaghan, Tommy Steele or Carolyn McKeever
For more info call 483-4256.

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Dateline: Depot Town:



A Neighborhood Forgotten by Time (and Life and Newsweek)

Les Church and Dave French appointed to Farmers' Market Advisory Committee

The old freighthouse in Ypsi's depot district has come a long way. A hundred years ago it was built to store goods of local manufacture on their way to the rest of the world. In winter it was often used to put up automobiles out of season. As rail commerce declined, the building was closed down and in the 1970's Beverly Shankwiler and Mary Liskow began to dream of moving the tiny farmers' market from a downtown parking lot to this historic structure.

A state study and grant followed and the City bought the building from the railroad. The first season's market was in the area outside the building. A market manager was hired, great improvements were made to the structure and the market went year 'round, twice a week, eventually moving to an exclusively inside operation.

With the addition of heat, plumbing and other civilities, the space became a popular place for meetings, parties, dinners, dances and much more than just a twice-a-week farmers' market. Eventually an advisory committee was formed to guide what some wags called, "Ypsilanti's version of Cobo Hall." It had become a true community center.

The Farmers' Market Advisory Committee, too, has undergone changes over the years. The appointments of contractor Les Church and saloon owner David French mark the first time this body has been 'officialized' by appointments of the Mayor of the City, moving it closer to the status of a 'commission,' although the appointees are not actually called 'commissioners, yet.

Serving at the the pleasure of Mayor Michael Homel are two community representatives-at-large: Lisa Anderson has replaced retiring founder Mary Liskow and Bill Fennel continues in his position; four market vendors: John Goetz, Don Fleisch, Fred Karpo and newly appointed Gail Kornbluth; and two representatives from the Depot Town Association: Les Church replacing Gary McKeever and David French replacing Pam Hamblin.

McKeever, who had been on the committee since its inception, suspects that his adversarial role with the City over the Recycling Project may have put him in disfavor with the Mayor, but wishes the new group "all the best." A property owner in the district, he had originally represented the Depot Town Merchants' Association, a committee of DTA which has long since been inactive. He continued to report to DTA on the activity of the advisory group.

Hamblin joined the advisory group as the second DTA representative only two years ago and claims credit for breathing life back into a committee which had not met in several years. Her efforts drew the attention of Jennifer Goulet, the City's new director of Community Development. Hamblin says "vendor contention and events promotion in that facility just cried out for my management experience." In her January 13th presentation to City Council, she said she suspected her appointment was probably not going to be renewed by the mayor. "Politics, you know. It's how it's done here." Hamblin finished by saying she was honored to have "been part of the long list of volunteers who have helped develop this important city asset."

The new Market Advisory Committee will, no doubt, continue the same line of noble volunteerism and Ypsilanti will continue to be one of the only two-day-a-week year-'round Farmers' Markets in the country . . . thanks to past volunteers; thanks to current volunteers; and, yes, thanks to the political processes involved.

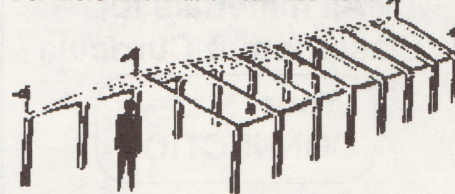
Church and French make an exciting new addition to this important committee and will carry the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market policies along to many new successes. Often described as "the Hudson's of our shopping center," the historic Freighthouse and the Farmers' Market function as a key property and an anchor business in the district and have enjoyed creative and direct management from its manager, Gary Urick. Last City election saw an unfounded rumor that one of the Council candidates had suggested selling the facility to a private, for-profit enterprise. Although no one could substantiate the rumor, it certainly brought to light the fact that Ypsilanti citizens highly value the existence of this unique facility - under the management of the City, its appointed manager, and the volunteers on the Advisory Committee. DTA's new representatives will carry on that legacy in fine form.

Happy Birthday, sweets

Try some of the good foods we carry as we celebrate our 19th birthday. The Co-op was incorporated as a non-profit organization to carry healthful foods and to inform others about them. We will celebrate on Saturday, April 16 from 11 am - 3pm. We will be serving a marvelous no-egg, non-dairy cake and organically-grown coffees in a variety of brands and flavors.

Samples and recipes using carob will be available. Carob is a healthy substitute for chocolate having three times the calcium, a third less calories and 17 times less fat. Also we will have samples of Granola Kitchen's carob candies - a delicious alternative for your sweet tooth.

The Ypsilanti Food Co-op is located at 312 North River Street in Ypsilanti's Depot Town. For more information call 483-1520



Outdoor stalls proposed

Last month's Market Advisory saw a proposal to move even more sales outdoors to the north end of the Freighthouse with the construction of a summer market stall covering. "A colorful, festival, covered outdoor marketplace to provide vendors and shoppers with shelter from rain and sunshine," said the accompanying proposal. "This improvement would assist in recruiting new farmer vendors for the outdoor market."

The one-piece structure would be 14 1/2 feet wide and 130 feet long, extending from north of the Freighthouse dock alongside Rice Street. The proposal is for a steel structure covered with plastic tarp. The sides would remain open for circulation and ventilation.

Market manager, Gary Urick will take the plan to the City and has already begun a campaign to solicit funds for the cost of construction.

Previously
Unpublished
news items

Normal School dean shrouded in mystery over co-ed ban from depot district, promises full-scale investigation into charges of elitism.

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Depot Town Association, Inc., 21 March 1994

Last day of winter quarterly meeting was at G & C McKeever's on Ford Lake.

• \$7300 in treasury.

• February minutes o.k. as published.

• April's *Rag* proofed on WEMU and Market stories. Blame Mark Twain for the rest.

• Caboose needs final clean up 9 a.m. Saturday, 9 April. Needs better security. Store the signs in Daily Grind basement. Dishes will go to April 17th 're-use-it' exchange at Freighthouse. Wedding on 11 June. Engine Club may replace north end steps and porch.

• Farmers' Market Advisory Committee: Market manager Gary Urick reported in absence of two new representatives. New facts on liquor liability, PL and PD. Fundraising scheme for new canopy is deductible from rent. Rental inquiries to be part of monthly meetings. Irene Krakowiak retiring from coffeeshop. New events refrigerator may be added. DTA will donate \$225 to canopy fund.

• Events: Carolyn McKeever has seen no response from Heritage Festival Committee yet (see p. 1). Heritage Jazz is up in the air. Will YHF dip into SAM \$ this year? Steve Gross will continue as DTA rep to Heritage Fest. Ideas: Split jazz and street stage? Big band and jitterbug contest to return? Auto show in same plaza as jazz? Control sound overflow from various stages? Arts and Crafts in street? Festival kick-off party location? What do the merchants want?

Special meeting for Depot Town businesses' input on Heritage Festival: 5:30 p.m. Monday, March 28 at the Daily Grind.

Frog Island Fest is June 23, 24, 25. No interest in managing parking. Paul Fettes reports many businesses endorsing small ads. Tom Steele sees interest from AA galleries.

• No response from Historic District Commission, yet, regarding letter about the depot. Send a follow-up.

• Spring planting needs a coordinator to propose a plan and date at April meeting. Plenty of others will offer advice. A Beatrix Potter garden is proposed for the Market triangle flower bed featuring Peter Rabbit and friends



DTA: Firmly rooted in the past - with a clear view forward!

• No response to proposal from Gus Macker tournament. Interested parties should contact Clare Hall at Huron Ser-

vice for Youth.

• DTA will sponsor the Great Train Race again this August.

• Membership cards need to be printed to remind members of expiration. Treasurer will get them made and distributed.

• Gaelic League of Ypsilanti reports St. Patrick's Day parade was great. Thanks to Judi Monaghan for chairing the parade and to Brenda Knox for making the banners. *Ypsi Press* reporter may have been on the wrong street. Thanks to C. McKeever for signs and banner and to the Flamingo Lady. Will League continue meeting?

• EMU's Anita Delany will address DTA on marketing on April 20. Any final word on last year's Parents' Day? Did the buses come?

• The Golden Goose to all who said the Gaelic League couldn't have a parade "the wrong way" on a one-way street.

• The Best Yet Award to the Gaelic League of Ypsilanti for proving it *can* be done. It was a marvelous event for the district and we hope to see it happen again!

• Next meeting at Cady's Grill Thursday, 7:30 p.m., 21 April 1994. By the time the quarterly meeting adjourned, it was officially spring.

Famous poets lost in Ypsilanti bars?

The *Ypsilanti Press* reports casual research being done on where Dylan Thomas may have washed his dirty comb in a glass of beer - in a bar near the Willow Run airport years ago. Here's what the membership was able to uncover at DTA's Quarterly Meeting in March:

• Lawrence Ferlinghetti may have smoked a joint behind The Daily Grind.

• Emily Dickinson reportedly tipped a glass of sherry at the Sidetrack Grill.

• Robert Burns is said to have quaffed a glass of Glen Leavit at Aubree's.

• Edna St. Vincent Millay was thought to have passed out in the alley by Hon's Flowers.

• Carl Sandberg is rumored to have had rum punch at the Old Town.

• Some think Charles Bukowski tossed straight shots while on the deck at Sticks.

• e. e. cummings may have drunk from a thermos proofing *The Rag* in the caboose.

• Ezra Pound said he didn't have anything to drink after leaving Ypsilanti State Hospital, but we have seen video tapes of him urinating on the wall of the Freighthouse.

There is no word on Dylan Thomas yet. Did anyone ask at Serenity House?



Strictly local stuff: April 1994

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

• D'town Development Authority

8 a.m. Wednesday 4/6
at The Daily Grind

• Depot Town Association

Monthly Meeting
7:30 p.m., Thursday, 4/21
Cady's Grill

• Depot Town Antique Engine Club

7:30 pm Thursday 4/24
at the Freighthouse Coffeeshop

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Judi D. Monaghan, president

c/o The Old Caboose

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Page 4 DTA, April 1994

1837 The Ypsilanti REPUBLICAN

"Ypsilanti's first newspaper began printing in 1837 - when I was only two years old. The publication, called *The Ypsilanti Republican*, was largely devoted to poems, stories and other miscellaneous reading matter that mostly appealed to genteel ladies. A true, red-blooded man wouldn't be caught with this paper folded in his coat pocket. Republicans had taken an active stand opposing slavery and the name no doubt indicated a liberal stance. Still, the pages were full of trite and simplistic 'girl talk.' It was important to have a newspaper if any town was going to call itself 'civilized,' and Ypsilanti was no exception. If you had a printing press grinding out copy somewhere on Main Street, you certainly qualified as 'modernistic.' At this point in my life I wasn't reading yet, so I don't suppose it made any difference. The paper folded after 18 months as a result of a dispute between the editor, John W. Wallace, and the stockholders and it's probably just as well."

Ypsilanti 1840 SENTINEL

"*The Sentinel*, another of Ypsilanti's early newspapers, began to run off the press in 1844. The Whig Party and the candidacy of Henry Clay for President of the United States were responsible for this publication. After the Whigs suffered defeat, the paper found itself without enough financial support. The owners, realizing the town needed a newspaper, sought out the help of Charles Woodruff. He had been quite a hustler in the area of the depot, had helped to establish the first bank in the area and his colleagues were known to transact many real estate deals in the saloons on Cross Street and in the Ann Arbor drinking parlors. They had a combine of hotels, saloons, flour and lumber mills and a variety of other projects too difficult to trace. If there was any money to be gathered together, these were the boys to do it. It was Woodruff who pumped new life into the press and continued its publication for many years."

1864 The COMMERCIAL

"In 1864, *The Commercial*, a hard-hitting newspaper of Henry Coe's, was born. I suppose there might be a great deal of entertainment in the mid-west right now, what with the rail line finally being completed, and all, but this new rag looked like a radical departure in local reading materials. Aiming at the downtown traffic, the publishers were moved first by their advertising budget, lastly by editorial content. No one should be surprised, however, since that's the format for virtually every paper that has ever been peddled. *The Commercial*, however, seemed to have some of the first real blood and guts of any newspaper the streets of Ypsilanti had ever seen. I can't seem to remember why or when these writers left town."



[Reports of his death were greatly exaggerated.]
This year Samuel Clemens is 158 years old!

The YPSILANTIAN

The Sentinel had evolved into *The Ypsilantian* by 1880, bought from W.T. Woodruff by a father, mother and daughter and run out of the basement office of a downtown bank. In 1887 Professor William M. Osband, another prominent Republican, sold his interest in Northville's Globe Furniture Company and brought his quick wit and political views to his newly purchased newspaper in the Savings Bank Building.

After years of teaching at the Wesleyan Seminary at Gouverneur, New York, Albert University in Ontario and Michigan's Olivet and Albion Colleges, Osband and daughter and wife, Marna, set up their typewriters around coffee pots and their basement newsroom became the center of social and political activity in Ypsilanti.

The paper boasted excellent local coverage and many ads in the personals columns. Advertising appeared on Page One of every issue, making it quite clear who owned what in town. Hot editorials were the most popular feature of these editions, being highly political and partisan, and quick to point out the shortcomings of others - usually not including those whose advertisements appeared on Page One.

The rest of the four 'sides' were typically devoted to recaps of the coming Sunday school lesson, notes from neighboring towns, literary notices and news from the Normal.

An insert sheet of four more 'sides' was 'plate matter,' provided by a distributing agency which offered up readings and graphics for every age and taste - none of it local. In his *The Story of Ypsilanti*, Harvey C. Colburn remembered these as 'thrilling continued stories, news reports from Washington of political situations, T. DeWitt Talmage's never failing sermons, Michigan news, agriculture advice, Seven Days up to Date, casualties, crimes and horrors, history, biography, and, not least, the latest styles in woman's adornment' -- not too unlike today's wire services which are able to fill hundreds of inches of columnar space with plenty of grey copy.

In later years it was an Ypsi boy, Peter F. Kuchnicki, who helped found *USA Today* in the same manner - later described as a 'newspaper for stupid people in a hurry.' He had long since left the paper by then, of course. Filler always has had its place in time."

'S.L. Clemens' reviews the rags in Our Town

Ypsilanti Press

"Today's *Ypsilanti Press* grew out of the town's earlier newspapers and evolved into a slicker that has been owned by a variety of financial and publishing combines over the years. It still features a variety of local interviews and observations and is now part of the Garden State Newspaper Group. *The Press* now focuses its writing on 'Serving Eastern Washtenaw County & Western Wayne County.' With this wide range, it is still fiercely hometownie in flavor and it dropped its 'Golden Triangle' motto some time before 1980, thank goodness."

THE NEWS ANN ARBOR

"Claiming a history clear back to 1835, *The Ann Arbor News* set up their news bureau in far-off Ypsilanti in May 1982 in what seemed a subscription war sustained in large part with 'crime maps' showing large blank spaces where no crimes were committed and reporters feared to venture to find a story. By the time *The News* opened its doors in Ypsilanti it was part of the giant Booth Newspaper chain, Republicans were no longer considered liberal, and the paper seemed to specialize in wire service national news, sports and stock reports. Regular readers felt the *Snooze* may be trying to take over the *Press*' markets and west siders seemed not to mind, since they liked the Ann Arbor designation better, anyway. Both are dailies and get ink all over readers' hands in true daily press tradition."

"With the advent of desktop publishing, anyone who could string together a sentence became a writer and observer of the local scene. Nearly every block in town had someone working on *The Great American Novel* who could turn pithy tales into quarterly, monthly, even weekly publications. Computers, faxes and copy machines replaced manual typewriters and mimeographs as the publishing world expanded at the greatest rate since Gutenberg's press in Europe."

"Watch out, Ypsilanti! Everybody thinks he's a newspaperman!"



"A nervous group of pretentious activists began *The Depot Town Rag* and played at being monthly newspapermen in 1976. They knew nothing of the real world beyond the block-long expanse from the Huron River to the railroad tracks, but carried with them a loyal readership which kept them in the storytelling business for nearly twenty years. It was longer than I had ever been able to do."

DTA, page 5, April 1994

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A Depot Town SAMPLER 'Crime column' a new feature

Last month's reports of vandalism to the newly rehabbed caboose and to the recently replicated crossing guard signal tower indicate the district may finally be moving into the Twentieth Century. Since that publication, enough additional Bad News has transpired that the editors can now turn these items into a monthly column.

Bull Moose boosted: Paul Klawitter called Dave French to alert him to the fact that he could see 'someone stealing the moose' at 4 a.m. Thursday, 10 March, but apparently French ran to the rescue of the wrong moose. Unlike the fictitious town on TV's *Northern Exposure*, French's real world has at least two mooses - one on the wall at his Sidetrack Grill, the other in his sister's former antique store next door. The next-door moose - the one being stolen - was purported to be the largest moose killed in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in 1956 - and the next Saturday's *Ypsilanti Press* reported a \$500 reward for its return.

Within a week the moose was found and the kidnappers avoided prosecution by returning it to Depot Town as an entry in the St. Patrick's Day parade.

Drunk hits caboose: The Two Jeffs heard a loud crash behind their apartment around 12:30 a.m. on Saturday, 5 March and reported the disturbance to police. Closer inspection showed a drunk driver being arrested after failure to traverse the straight-away of Rice Street from the city parking lot south to East Cross Street. He was unable to keep his pick-up truck from knocking down a traffic sign and tree on the west side and then hit the caboose on the east side of Rice. Since the caboose has been installed here as DTA's office/home, it no longer carries collision insurance. Parts of the pick-up truck are still imbedded in the caboose's new siding.

Neither the driver nor his pick-up were in the St. Patrick's Day parade, but he's offered to plant a new tree and fix the caboose.



Not on the sidewalk - only in the street The Ypsilanti Standard's annual spring invocation

Bicyclists are congratulated for their perspicacity to local standards: All vehicles belong in the street - unless they're being walked in the pedestrian right-of-way on the sidewalk.

- Ride your bike in the street.
- Walk your bike on the sidewalk.

Thanks to all bicyclists for keeping this practical standard of safety in Depot Town.

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